



## Editorial

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**Editor, Hawaii Medical Journal**

### **All Physicians Have Double Lives**

We, as physicians, have to wear more than one hat at the same time. In addition to our roles as healers, teachers, and researchers, we are husbands/wives, parents and children, all at once.

But there are some physicians who truly lead double lives – not as clandestine CIA or FBI agents, but as very special people. Some are very well-known in the media and some are not so well-known publicly as high-profile geniuses. Dr. Samuel Wong, Director of the Honolulu Symphony and the Hong Kong Philharmonic is also a Hawaii ophthalmologist.

Author Michael Crichton (*The Andromeda Strain*) is also a Harvard Medical School graduate. Other non-practicing physician-writers include Robin Cook (*Coma*), Ethan Canin (*Carry Me Across the Water*), Deepak Chopra (*The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*), and Spencer Johnson (*Who Moved My Cheese?*).

In reading *Double Lives* by David Heenan, a trustee of the James Campbell Estate and former Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University of Hawaii Business School, I was captivated by the biographies of fascinating people who have led more than one life. After 22 years, 57 astronauts and 36 “manned” missions, an American woman was in space on June 18, 1983. Sally Ride, the nation’s first woman astronaut, then found life after NASA. She helped in training scientific national security and in arms control affairs; accepted a position as Professor of Physics at U. C. San Diego, and developed “Kid Sat,” a kids’ satellite program, and she helps girls and young women become interested in science and math. Sally Ride’s advice, “Never Stop Learning.”

Tess Gerritsen, M.D., is also a very successful author, first writing romance novels. Her books include *Harvey*, which made the NY Times best seller list in 1996, *Life Support* (1997), *Bloodstream* (1998), and *The Surgeon* (2001). Tess Gerritsen’s advice, “write about what you know.”

Other biographies of creative souls with double lives include Norio Ohga, Chairman of the Board of Sony, opera singer, symphony conductor, and jet pilot. Ohga does it all by programming carefully.

Two of the biographies are familiar names to the art world, especially in Hawaii, Ron Kent and Chuck Watson. Kent, a well-known stockbroker, found his artistic talent in turned wood bowls while Watson, former Chairman of Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Company, later to leave Dillingham Corporation, forged old boilers, sugarcane rollers and restored tractors into sculpture appearing all over Hawaii and the Pacific.

*Double Lives* is not just a series of biographies; David Heenan offers a ready suggestion on “Crafting your Life of Work and Passion for Untold Success.” His last chapter offers 20 keys to a double life.

Historically, perhaps the best known literary physicians were Anton Chekhov and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. When I discovered the

cause of the sun sensitivity in red tattoos and published my studies in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, J. Russell Elkington, M.D., the Editor, said, “Goldstein has solved the Case of the Itching Tattoo with a deftness that would do honor to the Master Sleuth of Baker Street (himself a student and connoisseur of tattoos) and that would (as usual) bring amazement to the admiring Dr. Watson and consternation to Inspector Lestrade.”

Fortunately, most physician-writers have “not had to give up their day jobs,” and Heenan discusses many of them. Heenan says that according to some surveys 40% of physicians would do something else if they could. (Ed: undoubtedly, today because of HMO’s, HIPPA, etc.). Physicians are not alone in some dissatisfaction in their chosen profession. According to attorney and author John Grisham (*The Firm*), “most lawyers would rather be doing something else.”

In our profession, the commonality between medicine and literature is now becoming “institutionalized.” 74% of medical schools offered literature classes in 1999 and 39% required them!

I was very pleased to receive an announcement about the Third Annual National Medical Fiction Writers Competition for Physicians sponsored by SEAK Inc., a medical publishing company.

Please don’t give up your scalpel and stethoscope. You can have more than one life.



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